

Community outreach continues...

SEPTEMBER
Neighbors2Neighbors Program & Grocery Cards - Press Conference - Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church - Monday, September 12, 2005

OCTOBER
Homebuyer Assistance Program Press Conference - October 7, 2005
Grammy Award-winning artist Usher, Project Restart "Rejazz New Orleans" - Press Conference - Friday, October 7, 2005
New Bright Star Baptist Church Fall Festival - Saturday, October 15, 2005
Neighborhood, Housing & Redevelopment Committee Meeting - Tuesday, October 18, 2005
HCDD Combined Municipal Campaign's Appreciation Breakfast - Friday, October 20, 2005
KRIV Channel Fox 26 "The Black Voice" Interview - Saturday, October 22, 2005
KLAT-AM Univision 1010 AM Interview - Wednesday, October 26, 2005
Reverse Mortgage/Predatory Lending - Magnolia Multi-Service Center - Monday, October 27, 2005

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Presentation to the CDC Association of Greater Houston - General Meeting - Thursday, October 27, 2005
Sheltering Arms Senior Fair - Saturday, October 29, 2005
Kick-Off Celebration of the Homebuyer Assistance Program (HAP) - Monday, October 31, 2005 George R. Brown Convention Center

NOVEMBER
Real Estate Association Latinos Hispanic (R.E.A.L.) Real Estate Professionals of Houston, Thursday, November 3 at Maggiano's Restaurant 2019 South Post Oak Blvd.
KTRH-AM 740 "The Deborah Duncan's Show" Interview - Wednesday, November 9, 2005
Consolidated Plan - Public Hearing Meeting - Thursday, November 10, 2005-City Hall Annex Building
Univision's "Nuestra Vida" Channel KXLN 45 & KFTH 67 Interview - Wednesday, November 12, 2005
Homebuyer Assistance Program (HAP) Workshop - Monday, November 14, 2005-Third Ward Multi-Service Center
Neighborhood, Housing & Redevelopment Committee Meeting - Monday, November 15, 2005
Unveiling of the "Ladder of Hope" - Acres Homes Multi-Service Center - Wednesday, November 16, 2005
Avenue CDC's Community Forum Health, Safety & Housing Issues - Jefferson Davis High School, Thursday, November 17, 2005
SPARK PARK School Park Program celebration, Nov. 14-18, 2005
Reverse Mortgage/Predatory Lending - Third Ward Multi-Service Center - Monday, November 21, 2005
Neighborhood, Housing & Redevelopment Committee Meeting - Monday, November 21, 2005
The Oprah Winfrey Show (Oprah's Angel Network) Friday, November 23, 2005



From the Director...



"Dear Friends"

Welcome to the first edition of Housing Community Today! The entire team is eager to bring you news from the housing and community development front. Since arriving in January 2005, the team and I continue to strive in making the operations of the department transparent and accessible. We intend that our e-newsletter will serve as one more way to deliver important news to you about housing programs and services.

One of our top goals is to make the Housing and Community Development Department a "best in class" organization. The department can't achieve this without your help. We strive to be good stewards of the public funds entrusted to us and we need input from you, our stakeholders, on how best to serve Houston's low and

moderate-income families. The department plans to keep you informed and hope that you in turn will give us the feedback needed. Houston is our city – we must work together to improve the quality of life in all our neighborhoods.

As you know, the department faces many challenges; however, we are extremely optimistic about the progress being made.

To begin, the department has adopted new policies and procedures to ensure compliance with HUD regulations. Then, reorganization has been adapted to enact effective program delivery. Furthermore, our application process has been re-designed to provide greater tracking and fairness; and more importantly, the **new homebuyer's assistance** program is now underway! Incorporating these major changes will enrich our efficiency and effectiveness.

Finally, without **you** there is no Housing and Community Development Department and through collaborations we will build and revitalize Houston's community!

Sincerely,
Milton Wilson, Jr.

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Section Activity ...

HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for People with HIV/AIDS)

At the helm of HOPWA services, Dena Fontno-Gray is a professional advocate who is committed to educating the community in the field of HIV/AIDS. In 1991, at 21 years old, Ms. Gray was diagnosed HIV positive while attending the University of Houston. At that time, HIV was not discussed, particularly in the African American community. Stigma, discrimination and lack of knowledge permeated the community and made it difficult for those persons living with HIV to seek and secure services for a healthy, quality life.

“As an advocate for issues associated with HIV disease, I am excited to expand my role into the area of housing. The city of Houston has established sound working relationships with several AIDS service organizations dedicated to preventing homelessness among the HIV population. We are excited about the opportunity to increase the services that we provide as well as sharpen our existing services. One example of our desire to add increased housing stock to the HOPWA portfolio is the opening of Bonita Street House of Hope housing program. This program will assist 14 families, specifically women and children as well as provide supportive services such as daycare and counseling.

We are looking forward to an open and transparent dialogue with our agency partners as well as HUD to create new and innovative methods of preventing homelessness.”

Ms. Gray brings both professional and personal experience to the HOPWA section. As a representative of HCD and HOPWA, Ms. Gray currently sits on the Board of Directors for Coalition for the Homeless, the Ryan White Planning Council and the Title II planning body, State of Texas Assembly Group East. Ms. Gray joins Laverne Arceneaux and Antoinette Boone, seasoned HOPWA project managers, in revitalizing the program and working to increase stable housing for the HIV community in the city of Houston and its nine surrounding counties.

Project Review Process

The Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD) has instituted a Project Review Process (PRP) to evaluate all requests for funding submitted to it. The PRP was created to provide a comprehensive and transparent evaluation tool for the department and applicants seeking funding. The review process is designed to be open and interactive with the public.

The Project Review Team is comprised of a diverse group of professionals from a variety of disciplines within the department. Applications are reviewed for content, consistency with the Consolidated Plan, eligibility, underwriting requirements and overall impact on the quality of life in Houston. While the PRP continues to evolve, we have begun to review a backlog of proposals that were submitted to the department over the last several months during the suspension of the HOME program. Although the HOME grant program is still suspended, HCDD Director Milton Wilson, Jr. believes that it is important to continue the review process in anticipation of the HOME program being fully restored soon. HCDD wants to have proposals ready to go when the program is operational once again in Houston.

We believe that the PRP is an important tool as we partner with communities and neighborhoods throughout the city to deliver first class, safe and affordable housing and community development initiatives to the people of Houston.



Single Family Home Repair Program

In July 2004, City Council approved \$2,000,000 in Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) funds for the Housing and Community Development Department’s Single Family Home Repair Program (SFHR) for citizens who are at least 62 years of age homeowners who can demonstrate and document their disability. Other eligibility requirements mandate that annual income must not exceed 50% of the median income as established by HUD; homeowners property taxes must be current or exempted; and homeowners must be owner-occupants of the residence within the city limits and the primary occupants of the residence for at least six months.

The Tier I SFHR/EHR program is for true emergencies. An emergency, as defined by HUD, is a condition that is an immediate threat to life, health and/or safety occurring without warning, and repairs must be commenced within a 24-72 hour period. To date, approximately 69 emergency repairs have been completed which total \$133,822.91.

The Tier II (Rehabilitation) program is for repairs that do not qualify under the Tier I program and are repairs that preserve existing properties that do not exceed \$30,000. As a result of the suspension of the program by HUD in November 2003, 2700 homes must be re-inspected. Currently, 25 homes are under construction totaling \$192,952.62

The Tier III (Reconstruction) program, cover properties that exceed the \$30,000 cap and are in such disrepair it is determined that it is more economical to demolish and reconstruct the property. Presently, there are five properties scheduled for demolition and reconstruction in the amount of \$446,277.35.

Mrs. Waddle’s Ribbon Cutting Celebration

(Rev. C.L. Jackson, Secretary Alphonso Jackson, Mrs. Earnestine Waddle, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee, Mayor Bill White, and an ACORN representative).



Community outreach in action...



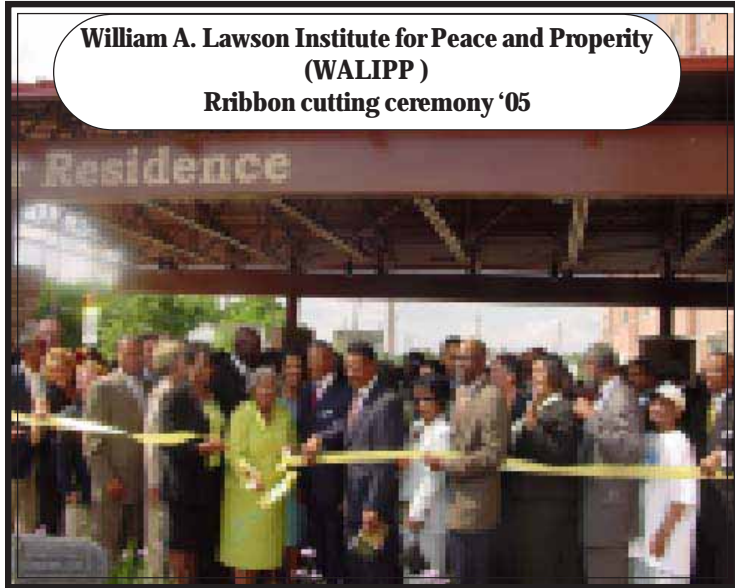
Housing Program Status Update Meeting '05



Scenic Woods Library Re-Opening '05



Mancuso Branch Library Re-Opening '05



William A. Lawson Institute for Peace and Prosperity (WALIPP) Ribbon cutting ceremony '05



Bonita House of Hope Transitional Housing Complex '05

Grants Management

There is a legal requirement under all federal grants that charges the recipient (City) for ensuring that all federal funds are used in accordance with all legal requirements. The use of subrecipients and contractors does not relieve the City of this great responsibility. To this end, the Grants Management (GM) Section is responsible for the general management of all federal grants through the oversight and provision of several mandated, interrelated functions that serve the entire HCDD. GM is HCDD's Eligibility Official and is responsible for ensuring that eligibility in all activities that receive federal grant funding. GM also provides significant input into written agreements and other departmental documents and any technical assistance that is necessary to implement the rules and process the work products of HCDD.

GM oversees the HUD mandated, real time, mainframe-based computer application for reporting and tracking disbursements on all federal grant activities. GM prepares and publishes the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (the CAPER), which is generated through IDIS. GM also produces a number of other reports that assist HCDD in managing and determining the status of its grant funds. Finally, GM is responsible for budget verification, amendments and transfers and for ensuring that the public notice requirements are met under all circumstances. All of the aforementioned functions can be tied together and generally apply to all grants. Whenever you don't know who to ask or where to go, contact GM and we will guide you to the right source. For information please contact Brenda Scott, Administration Manager at 713-868-8484. The GM staff are Mary Owens, Diana Crowder, Rita Henderson and Antionette Dickson.

Fair Housing

The City of Houston's Fair Housing Office is the Housing and Community Development Department. The Fair Housing Office is staffed with two professionals who work to assist persons in the Houston Metropolitan Area who need help understanding whether they are being treated fairly in their respective housing situations. The Federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing for the following reasons:

- Race or Color, National Origin, Religion, Sex, Familial Status (children under 18 years of age), and Handicap.

No one engaging in the housing business may discriminate against the above named protected classes by:

- Refusing to rent or sell a house or an apartment; refusing to make a dwelling available; denying falsely that a dwelling is vacant or available; or providing different conditions or services.

The staff advises, counsels, and negotiates (when requested) for all who seek assistance to assure they are not being unfairly treated.

Many of the landlord/tenant disputes are negotiated and settled satisfactorily by the staff. However, other disputes which appear discriminatory, based upon facts presented by a complainant, will be transferred to the HUD regional office in Ft. Worth for prosecution or settlement.

The Coordinator of the Fair Housing Office is Royce Sells, who can be reached at 713-868-8461. The Office Specialist, Rosalinda Cabezuela, who speaks fluent Spanish, can be reached at 713-868-8463.

Section Activity...

The New Affordable Housing Assistance Program

HCDD has designed a new Homebuyer Assistance Program (HAP) that will provide financial assistance to low-to-moderate income homebuyers in the incorporated area of the City. HCDD staff and/or future sub-recipients will administer HAP according to the procedures set forth in the Administrative Guidelines. The primary goal of HAP is to increase homeownership opportunities for low- to-moderate income persons while meeting national goals and objectives as set under the federal grant programs.

Funding for HAP will be available through the HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) Program, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, the American Dream Down Payment Initiative (ADDI), Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) and any other funds that become available. For further homebuyer's information refer all calls to (713) 522-HOME (4663).

HAP'S Staff:	John Palmer, Jr.	Administration Manager
	Sandra Woodard	Administrative Supervisor
	Kennisha Freeman	Management Analyst
	Elvira Gonzalez	Administrative Specialist
	Gerri Motley	Customer Service Representative
	Alicia Garza	Customer Service Representative
	Elizabeth Gaytan	Customer Service Representative

The Neighborhood And Facilities Renovation Program

The City of Houston as a goal of its Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), seeks to promote viable neighborhoods by strengthening the coordination between city government and non-profit agencies. The goal of the Neighborhood Facilities Renovation Program funded under the CDBG Program is to reduce the deterioration of facilities in low-to-moderate income areas through facility renovation efforts. The City will award grants for acquisition, new construction and renovation costs to non-profit agencies that provide services for low-to- moderate income persons.



Public Service Programs

Funds are allocated to various city departments and non-profits to fund projects that address the general welfare and needs of low and moderate-income persons. Funds are allocated for the following services: Child Care, Juvenile Delinquency Prevention, Anti-Gang Prevention, Emergency Shelter Grants Program (Homeless), After School Achievement Program, Tuberculosis Control, HIV/AIDS Education Program, Street Lighting and Day Labor Programs.

Community Outreach (New kid on the block...)



**Judge Ruben Guerrero,
Community Outreach
Assistant Director**

We welcome Judge Guerrero to Community Outreach, the newest Division of the Housing and Community Development, which comprises the Public Information Office and the Public Service and Neighborhood Facilities. The Judge is a long-time veteran of the community with demonstrated voice of concern and legal opinion. He brings 32 years of experience and understanding as a leader in the community.

The Community Outreach Division of HCDD is a strong advocate for affordable housing resources in the Greater Houston area. Committed to finding solutions that work and making a difference in the community, the Community Outreach Division strives to educate about predatory lending, inform about upcoming affordable housing programs, empower leadership and city council members, collaborate with our concerned neighbors and constituents, and at every opportunity, we reach out to expand public awareness on issues of: reverse mortgages, contractor scams and options for home preservation. We are a “best in class” department.

Planning and Processing

2005 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Released

HCDD has completed the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department's required Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) report. The AI, a required component of the Consolidated Plan, is a comprehensive review of a jurisdiction's laws, regulations and administrative policies, procedures and practices affecting the location, availability and accessibility of housing. The AI is also an assessment of conditions, both public and private, affecting fair housing choice.

Impediments, recommendations and current City of Houston action are identified in the AI. Daniel Bustamante of the Greater Houston Fair Housing Center and Dr. Rita D'Andrea, of the University of Houston School of Social Work, worked as contributing consultants in the development of the AI. For more information or a copy of the AI, please contact Vickie McBride at 713-868-8302.

2005 Consolidated Plan

The 2005 Consolidated Plan was produced by the Housing and Community Development Department in collaboration with residents, community leaders, representatives from non-profit and for-profit agencies as well as other city departments. This Plan describes how \$65,332,334 in federal funds will be spent to assist low and moderate-income Houstonians. The Plan highlights existing needs, presents a Five-Year Strategy and promotes improvement projects for the current fiscal year. This Plan represents a unified vision for implementing improvement strategies throughout Houston. The Consolidated Plan will be released for printing in August. For more information, contact Paulette Wagner at 713-868-8441.

